



**CHARACTER SKETCH ENTERTAINMENT**

FOR

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES,**

**BIBLE CLASSES**

**AND OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS**

ENTITLED

**The Minister's Bride**

**STRICTLY NON-TRANSFERABLE**

PS 8501  
K27  
M5  
1914

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**The Minister's Bride**

BY  
**CLARA E. ANDERSON**  
AUTHOR OF  
"A Ladies' Aid Business Meeting at Mohawk Crossroads"  
AND  
"Afternoon Tea in Friendly Village, 1862."

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## CHARACTERS

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**The Minister**—Rev. John West. A young man of good appearance and presence ; possessing strength of character, dressed in black long coat, high stand-up collar and black folded neckcloth.

**The Minister's Bride**—A pretty young girl ; hair hanging in curls, and only partly caught up on one side by a bunch of pink roses. Her dress is of pink muslin, frilled to the waist, tight bodice, hoops, bustle and fichu of net, finished with corsage, bouquet of pink roses, a pleasant manner.

**Mrs. Joe Crabb**—A strong minded woman, hair parted and brushed severely back ; dressed in a polonaise, large bustle and hoops, and a stiff poke bonnet with two feathers standing at the back.

**Mr. Joe Crabbe**—Meek retiring man, clothes well worn and too tight.

**Mrs. Betterdays**—A nice looking girl, black silk dress, trimmed with pieces of good old lace, gold bracelets, watch with heavy gold chain, large brooch and long ear-rings.

**Mrs. Sharpe**—Small dark woman, given to peering around ; wears bright red with very full skirt on which rows of black lace are basted, plain basque trimmed the same, bonnet of white lace, red feather, and black ribbon streamers.

**Mrs. Charity**—Stout, white haired and motherly, wears lilac print, large hoops and bustle, apron big bonnet and shawl.

**Mrs. Seegood**—A refined cultured lady. Any becoming old-fashioned costume can be worn.

**Mr. Amos Right**—A knowing young man, strikingly but becomingly dressed, given to much learning.

**Miss Smiley**—A pretty girl, dressed in pale blue, ruffles and sash, scarlet geraniums in hair and bodice; given to giggling.

**Molly Charity**—Prettily dressed in white muslin, skirt draped over hoops and caught up with blue bows, blue sash and bow of blue in hair.

**Jim Curtis**—Reluctant bridegroom; wears very low vest with ruffled shirt front and gold studs.

**Miranda Meek**—Would-be bride. Bright coloured dress, plentifully trimmed with wide white lace, basted on in rows; large white sash, white lace bonnet trimmed with white feather, bright flowers and long white streamers.

**Miss Jones**—Sings well. Any pretty becoming costume which is not modern. Hair curled and loosely caught up.

**Robert Spence**—Assumes city airs, dressed in extreme, low vest, bright red tie, large ring, heavy watch chain, hair parted in middle.

**Janet Heather**—Sings Scotch songs. A bright conspicuous plaid, or white with bright tartan sash, white stockings and low shoes with large buckles.

**Ephraim Snelgrove**—Very bashful young man, sleeves too short, displaying hands and wrists, an awkward manner, a large red handkerchief is used to mop his brow when confused.

More young people who sing and others also should attend the party at the minister's house in the last scene. All must wear suitable costumes.

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The greatest care should be taken that the right person is chosen to interpret the different parts, as the success of the entertainment depends greatly on that.

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Speak plainly and distinctly, and very much louder than in ordinary conversation.

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Do not practice or repeat parts before those not taking part.

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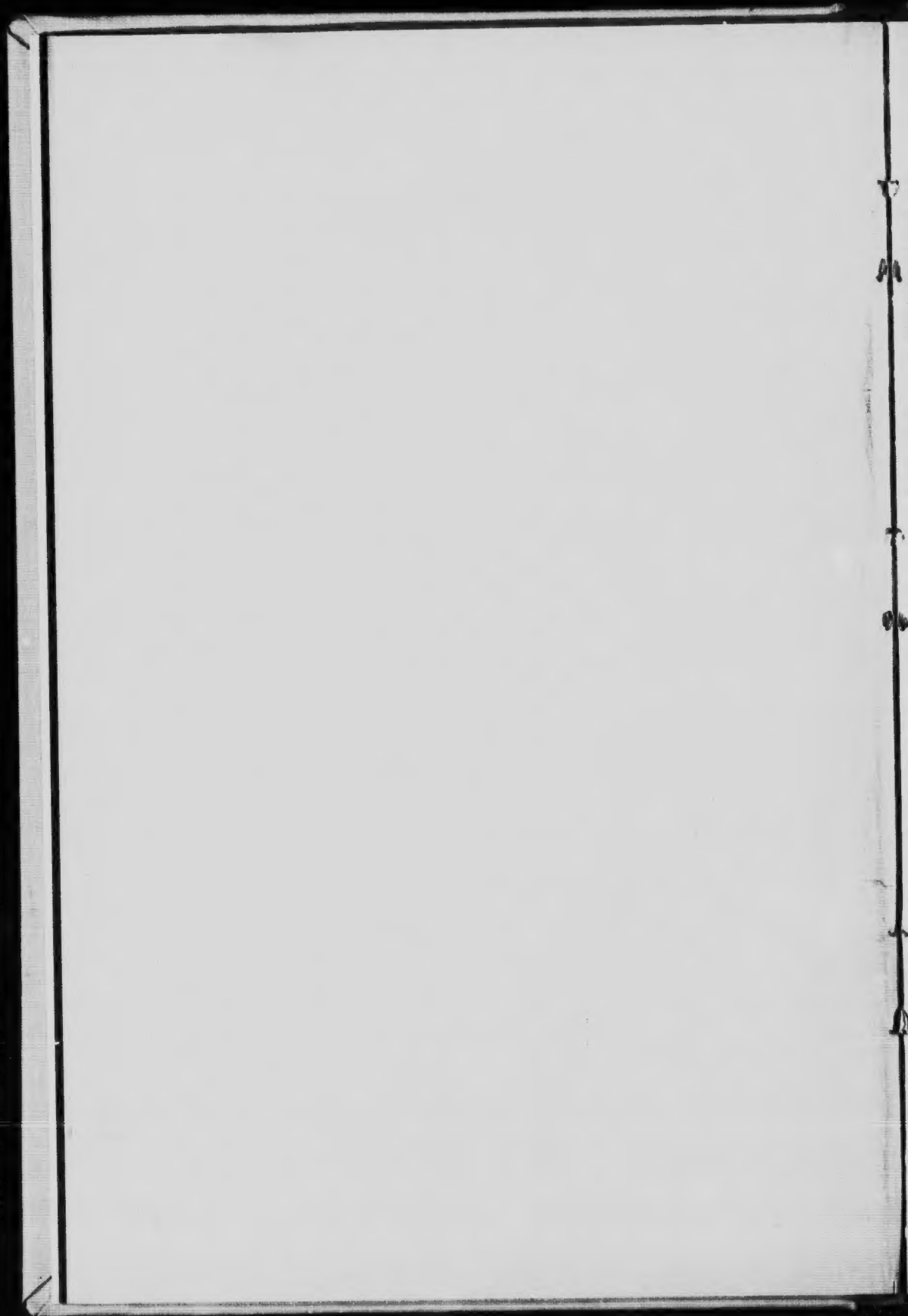
If you want your Entertainment to be a success, interest as many as possible, enthuse over it, sell tickets yourselves, not leaving it to children; do not fail to advertise, and you will be well repaid.

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All dresses worn must be old-fashioned as possible; as far as possible wear hoops and bustles.

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The minister and bride must possess originalty as all actions cannot be stated.





## SCENE I.

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Scene opens in the minister's parlor before the arrival of the minister and bride from their honeymoon.

A deputation of women are arranging the parlor for their homecoming.

Three very large old-fashioned framed crayon photos of men hang side by side on the wall, heavily draped over the top in black and purple. All arrangements should be very stiff, and lack the artistic. Stuffed birds on what-not, and a large one on centre table, on bright clotcheted mat, ugly vases, china cats and dogs, wool wreaths, and tidies on stiff chairs set against the walls.

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Mrs. Crabbe, Mrs. Betterdays, Mrs. Sharpe, Mrs. Charity and Mrs. Seegood arranging parlor when curtain rises.

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Mrs. Sharpe—And so the minister is fetching his bride home to-night. I can hardly wait to see what his choice is like, but I'll know as soon as I clap my eye on her, whether she is the woman for him or not. As I said to him when he was leaving, to fetch her, remember, says I, you're more folks than yourself to suit when you are choosing your wife. He can't say he was'nt warned to use his eyes.

Mrs. Charity—Dearie me, Anna Sharpe, and did you speak that way to our minister and him just going off so happy like to fetch her, I would'nt

have been so discouragin', and at such a time, too. I am sure it needs a woman around the minister's house badly enough; them hens have done no good since our last minister's wife left, just a layin' round everywhere but at home, where their duty is to lay, as you all well know, hens being so contrary like, and not a comprehendin' of their duty at all, at all, the minister's hens bein' no better nor other people's to my way of thinkin', more is the shame for them.

Mrs. Crabbe—You never did have no sense, Betsy Charity. I'd just like to know what hens have to do with the minister getting a wife. Don't go blaming it on the hens, he was'nt drove to it by no such thing as hens. Ministers are just like other men to my way of thinkin', only more so, taken in by the first pretty face, not considerin' any one else but themselves in their choice, as I was tellin' my man this very morning, when he was settin' up to know so much, not havin' the brains to back it up.

Mrs. Betterdays—Well, I really had not heard any particulars regarding the minister's bride; what grounds have we for concluding he has not chosen wisely?

Mrs. Seegood—I have faith enough in our minister to believe that he has not been guilty of any rashness or undue haste in the choice of his bride, and if they are happy I can gladly rejoice with them.

Mrs. Crabbe—That's just like you, Mary Jane Seegood, you never had the interest of the people at heart. Now, if our minister had taken the

one I had in my mind for him, being a first cousin of my own, and as like me as two peas, why, things would have gone different in this place to my way of thinking.

Mrs. Seegood—One is strongly inclined to agree with you, they certainly would have gone differently, but whether for the peace and prosperity of the people or otherwise, I would prefer not to say just here.

Miss Sharpe—Well, all I have to say is, let me once lay my eyes on her, and if she is likely to suit us, I will let you know the first half hour. I'm never long in making up my mind ; eyes is eyes, I say, and made to see with.

Mrs. Seegood—I never can understand, ladies, why we should have our eyes open for the flaws in people; it is much more pleasant to see the good, and my experience is, that you do not require to look so diligently to discover the good as you do to discover the flaws.

Mrs. Crabbe—You'r always strong on the preaching.

Mrs. Charity—(Overheated from exertion, sinks into rocking-chair, rocks, and mops her face)—Dearie me, what a lot of fuss over nothing. As I see those three pictures a hangin' there side by side, of the three dear ministers that we have laid away while ministerin' to us, I can hardly keep the tears from fallin', and spottin' up my best alpaca, as shows ever drop of water as is spilt on it, though I rubbed it well with soap bark the day after the funeral of poor Mr. Weeks, the last one to leave us, his picture being the last one, as has the most drapin' on, as is quite fittin' to my mind.

(puts up handkerchief to eyes, but seeing a drop has fallen on skirt, forgets to cry, and wipes it off vigorously, holds up to light to see if it is out.) One can have no comfort a mour-nin' in alpaca anyway.

Mrs. Betterdays—I had not heard since coming to the village that you had been so sorely bereaved. Is it possible that those are three ministers whose pictures hang there? (Goes up to look at them.) What could have been the trouble?

Mrs. Charity—No trouble in particular as ever I heard on; of course at times things went contrary like wid 'em as we all know such things must be, and don't think nothin' of it, but they all slipped away from us so suddin' like, "their end being peace," as the hymn speaks of, and is writ on their tombstones.

Mrs. Crabbe—They had no call to leave us. We were never exacting in this village. I told them one and all I was willing to help them with their discourses, suggesting improvements and sich like, but not one came for help, which I would have gladly gave.

Mrs. Betterdays—Well, to change the subject, ladies, don't you think the parlor looks too dismal with the pictures draped like a funeral? It lacks a welcome, I think; could'nt we take them down, and remove some of these ornaments, to make room for some of the bride's things, no doubt she has pictures and ornaments of her own?

Mrs. Crabbe—Remove those pictures! never while Jane Crabbe is here to defend them, never

shall a desecrating hand be set upon them  
(goes up to defend th m.)

Mrs. Charity—Do set down, Jane; don't take on so.  
I never knew you set such store by them before.

Mrs. Crabbe—When folks is dead it is different. I never was one to show my feelings before folks when they are alive and in the flesh, but when they can't defend themselves, as is the case with the three on the wall, they can count on Jane Crabbe for a friend.

Mrs. Betterdays—Well, I guess it there is nothing I can do I will get my bonnet and shawl and go on home— (all prepare to leave)—although this room is in bad taste, and I would love to set a bonfire in it.

Mrs. Seegood—Well, probably Mrs. West may introduce something that will appeal to the artistic.

Mrs. Crabbe—I must be off and see what Joe has been doing all afternoon; nothing, I suppose, being naturally shiftless.

Mrs. Charity—I must go, too, for I told our Molly to chop the heads off the two fat geese so as I can have 'em all ready to offer the minister and his missis to-night, when I come over. I'll tell her there are heaps of kind, nice people who will be showin' their feelings towards her in hams and sausages, not to speak of quilts, hand pieced, hooked mats and such like.

Mrs. Betterdays—You don't suppose the minister and his bride would feel hurt at your offering them two geese, and them just returning from

their honeymoon? They would'nt take it to themselves, would they?

Mrs. Charity—Well, now, I do declare, I never thought of that at all, at all. Oh, I think they will be sensible and hide their feelings'. I will explain how I never thought that the present would be so fittin' like, and not to take it to heart, for two fatter, better fed geese than them never was set before man nor minister, not but what our minister is both, and worthy of the best and fattest goose that ever was growed, and that's the truth, deny it who will, I'll tell him no goose or wife neither was too good for him.

Mrs. Sharpe—Well, I'll go too; I want to be home in time to see them step out of the coach. I hope he has made a good choice, but I'll know as soon as I get my eyes on her. (Arranges glasses on her nose.)

(All leave room as curtain falls, after putting on bonnets and shawls.)

SCENE II.

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Minister and his bride in the parlor, hanging a couple of pictures of Madonnas. A tea-table is arranged in corner, a few touches have been added which improve appearance of room. Books and a parlor lamp are on the centre table instead of bird. The room looks in better taste and more inviting.

Bride—John dear, do you think we will ever become used to this room ? I have done my best with it, but those awful draped pictures, if we only might remove them; no matter which way I turn they look down on me, and seem to reproach me, and to laugh or sing in this room seems nothing short of sacrilege.

The Minister—Well, Rosaline, you might perhaps make some alterations and live, but I charge you not to lay a desecrating hand on the pictures of my honored predecessors, it would not have a tendency to promote peace and harmony in the congregation .

Bride—Well, I have removed the peacock feathers, and a few of the most outstandingly hideous things. I had to in order to make room for my own ornaments and pictures. These are my favorite pictures, too.

Minister—Well, I should'nt wonder but the women will be here to call soon, it is two o'clock.

(Bride has tea-table set in corner, with very small cups, good old silver, very tiny sandwiches and small cakes.)

Bride—Oh, dear, I am so nervous, John, meeting all your people, I do hope for your sake they will like me.

Minister—Never fear, they will soon like you for your own sake, but I think I hear wheels, sure enough here is Mrs. Charity, her arms loaded with stuff.

Mrs. Charity—(Lays down large parcels, shaped to look like geese, if geese are not obtainable—if geese are brought do not wrap them up—shake hands heartily with minister and bride when minister presents her.)—I am that glad to see you both looking so happy and contented like, and this is your missis, your kindly welcome, Mistress West, as I told the women folks when they was misdoubtin' the minister's choice; says I, I knew he'd do the best he could by both himself and us.

Bride—Do be seated, Mrs. Charity, you look so very warm.

Mrs. Charity—Dearie me, but it is the hot, disturbin' work making calls. I told Molly I would rather spend a whole day over the wash tub, but seein' as I want to bring you these geese, as I hope you won't be offended by the same, as I did'nt mean nothing personal, but if I do say it, there never was a likelier pair of geese raised, being all cornfed. (Chokes for breath and hands them to bride.)

Bride—Oh! thank you so much, it is extremely kind of you to remember us, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness so much; now, do let me give you a cup of tea. (Minister shakes hands with Mrs. Charity, saying he has to make a call. Tells bride he will soon be back.)



Mrs. Charity—That's the way with ministers. How well I mind the three dear departed ones who hang fornenst me. (Mops eyes.)

Bride—(Brings her tea)—You will feel better for the tea, Mrs. Charity. (She takes tray and all on her ample lap.)

Mrs. Charity—As I was a sayin, dear, act kindly to your man while he is spared to you. He's a good man, and you'd be findin' it hard to replace him if he was took. Well do I remember the three as hang there when they was well and hearty like your man, and I saw them laid out one after another in this very parlor, right where you are sittin' (bride changes chairs, dries her eyes), lookin' so peaceful and beautiful, "All their warfare ended," as the hymn-book says. The last one a settin' up to a good biled dinner the minute he was took. I often say to my man, "It is just like visitin' the graveyard to go over to the ministers and set in his parlor and to think of those as has been laid out in it.

(Bride can't keep tears back, wipes eyes and tries to be brave.)

Bride—Is your tea right, Mrs. Charity, and won't you have more bread and butter?

Mrs. Charity—Well now, dearie, I will; the tea does seem a little stinted to be sure, the cups bein' so small I didn't really sense the taste of it (takes a sandwich all in one bite.)

Mrs. Charity—It is badly I feel to see that one minister and his missis should be so short of bread, and them just comin' to us. I will go

and send Molly over with some home-made bread for the minister's supper. Be good to the minister, child, and if ever you want a friend call on me, dearie.

(Kisses her loudly.)

Bride—Oh, dear! Oh, dear! she is kind and good I know, but (bell rings)—Oh, there is someone else. (Enter Mrs. Sharpe and Mrs. Betterdays.)

Mrs. Sharpe—Good day, mam, I hope I see you well ?  
(Shakes her hand once stiffly.)

Mrs. Betterdays—You are very welcome, Mrs. West, not only for the minister's sake, but for your own.

Bride—Oh, thank you so much, I shall try and be worthy of your kind welcome. It was so good of you to come on such a warm day.

Mrs. Sharpe—When one has a duty to do I believe in them doing it, heat or no heat.

Mrs. Betterdays—Well, if all duties were as pleasant as the duty of calling on our minister's bride, we would not find them burdensome.

Bride—You are very kind, Mrs. Betterdays. Now, do let me give you and Mrs. Sharpe a cup of tea.

Mrs. Sharpe—(Takes cup slowly off tray, examines trade mark on spoon, refuses sandwich.)—No, I never eat between meals, not but what anybody could eat a plate of such odds and ends as those and not feel it.

Mrs. Betterdays—Why, Mrs. Sharpe, these sandwiches are delightful, you are missing a treat.

Bride—I am so pleased that you enjoy them.

Mrs. Sharpe—I have been looking for the sheaf of peacock feathers and other ornaments as I don't see in their accustomed places. (Has her glasses on, looking.)

Mrs. Betterdays—Now, Jane, it is really bad manners to stare around a room and make comments when making social calls, in my opinion it is a vast improvement to have them removed. I see some others coming, so think we had better make room for them. (Bids good bye graciously.)

Mrs. Sharpe—Well, good bye, mam. I am sorry to see so many changes in the parlor. Things removed as have stood for twenty years, and with care would be there for twenty longer.

( Goes out as Molly enters.)

Molly—(Carrying large double loaf of bread)—Mother wished me to step over with a little bread for your supper, Mrs. West, she was so distressed to find you short of bread when we are always so well supplied.

Bride—(Takes bread)—Thank you so very much, but to tell the truth, Miss Charity—

Molly—Oh, do call me just Molly. How pretty and sweet you look in that dream of a frock. I am so glad you have come, I like you already; won't you let me come over and see you often? Oh, pardon me, but you have some of my favorite books, too. Tennyson (takes book and turns pages); don't you think it is wonderful what he says?—

“As the husband so the wife is,  
 Thou art mated to a clown,  
 And the grossness of his nature  
 Will have power to drag thee down.”

But, dear me, how stupid of me to suggest such a possibility when calling on a bride, do pardon me.

Bride—Why, certainly, Molly, we will be the best of friends I am sure. I do wish you would come over in the evenings, my husband is out so much and you never will believe how this room is haunted, and the faces stare down at me until I cover my head, I am so frightened.

(Enter minister and Mr. Amos Right with much confusion.)

Minister—Well, dear, how have you been getting along? I have just brought in Mr. Right to meet you. My wife, Mr. Right.

Mr. Right—(Bows low)—I am much indebted to your husband for allowing me the inestimable privilege of making the acquaintance of “one who embodies the rare combination of beauty and brains,” as the poet says. Pardon me speaking my mind, “I am but a plain blunt man,” which quotation, as you will recognize, is from the oration of Mark Anthony, over the body of Cæsar.

Bride—“You do much flatter me, most noble Sir.”—  
 (Bows low.)

The Minister—Why, Molly, a thousand pardons for not seeing you before this; how are you?

Mr. Right—An unexpected pleasure, Miss Molly,

truly the gods are kind. An auspicious place to meet again, at the minister's house. In all verity I have not had the pleasure of beholding you since our long-to-be-remembered sleigh ride, I trust you did not contract a cold, that "the winds of heaven did not visit you too roughly."

Molly—Nothing, or no one visited me roughly, as far as I am aware of. I took a bad cold in my head, if that is what you mean.

Mr. Right—Most lamentable indeed, so young and yet so afflicted. When science and medicine have made further research it will be discovered that colds are not due to atmospheric conditions, but to certain microbes which float about and lay in wait for those whose organs are in a condition to receive them.

The Minister—Well, we hope they will pass by Miss Molly, for she is far too necessary to the happiness of the community.

Molly—I never felt better in my life, Mr. West. Now I must go, or mother will miss me (Mr. Right offers to accompany her.) No, thank you, Mr. Right, I can go alone (looks back), you might take cold (laughs).

Mr. Right—A fine girl—a good education, too, but her conversation is entirely lacking in literary adornment, such as an apt quotation from the classics, or a passing reference to the latest scientific research.

Bride—Do have a cup of tea, Mr. Right (hands him one.)

Mr. Right—Thank you, Mrs. West. You will be in-

terested to know, I am sure, that we are indebted to the Chinese for the most esteemed and extensively used of all non-alcoholic beverages. Some contend that the tea plant was introduced primarily from Corea as early as the fourth century of the Christian era, while others contend that China was the first country to produce it.

(Knock at door. Mr. Right bids good bye, pleading engagement. Enter Mr. and Mrs. Crabbe.)

Minister—Come right in, Mrs. Crabbe, and Joe, too, I am glad to see you. (Introduces bride, both shake hands stiffly with her. Joe sits down on edge of chair and turns his toes in, very ill at ease.)

Mrs. Crabbe—You may thank me for bringing him here. Says I, Joe Crabbe, do your duty by your minister instead of settin' round home, thinkin' of what you're going to eat for the next meal; some folks think too much of the things of this world—eatin' and drinkin' and sich like.

Joe—I am sure I try to be uncomplatin' altho' times I would like something different from cold porridge and warmed up hash, but I did'nt ever set up to ask for it.

Mrs. Crabbe—No, indeed, Joe Crabbe, right well you know better than to set up to ask—eat what your wife sets before you, and ask no questions. Hav'nt I been teachin' you that for the last twenty years?

Joe—That you have, Jane, you have did your duty by me.

Bride—Oh, do let me give you a cup of tea, Mr. Crabbe.

Minister—Yes, Joe, have some of Mrs. West's tea and bread and butter.

Joe—(Looks at wife)--Can I, Jane? You don't mind? (takes it.)

Mrs. Crabbe—You can suit yourself, Joe Crabbe, if you think it is manners eatin' out of your own house, as if you did'nt get enough to eat at home.

(Offers tea to Mrs. Crabbe.)

Mrs. Crabbe—No, thanks, I had my dinner 'fore I came. I don't drink tea anyway, it makes folks that ugly you can't live with them.

Joe—Why, Jane, I thought you drunk two cups every meal.

Mrs. Crabbe—Joe Crabbe, when you are spoken to answer, and not before; set straight back on your chair or you'll fall off and smash your cup. Can't you see you are trampin' the bread and butter into the carpet?

(Joe, much embarrassed, stoops down to pick up bread, spills tea on carpet and trousers.)

Minister—Never mind, Joe (minister and bride help) no harm done. (Wipe it off carpet and clothing.)

Mrs. Crabbe—There now, you have spotted up your best Sunday suit. You'll be a long time wantin' a new one, I'll tell you that. It is only a matter of ten years since I bought that one for you. You never was savin' and careful.

Joe—If you don't mind, minister, I think I will just be going. I have a few chores to do before supper. I ain't much account in company. I hope Mrs. West won't hold it again' me spoiling the carpet.

Bride—Why, not at all, Mr. Crabbe; won't you come some day and show me how to fix the flower beds?

Joe—That I will, mam, gladly, and there won't be finer beds in the village, if Joe Crabbe can give you a hand.

Minister—You are a good fellow, Joe. Good bye, we all know your worth.

Mrs. Crabbe—Here comes Mrs. Seegood. She is a very up-settin' one; was set on takin' those three pictures off the wall, men as passed away doin' their duty by us. Who are those folks in the pictures as have just been hung up? (Goes up and examines.) They seem short of clothes, whoever they be. Some of your poor relations I suppose, Mrs. West? Pity they had'nt waited to get some clothes before havin' their pictures took.

Bride—Oh, no, Mrs. Crabbe, those are a couple of the Madonnas. I am very proud of them, they are such good copies of the originals.

Mrs. Crabbe—Well, all I have to say is, that I never thought to live to see the day when papist pictures would hang on the minister's wall, nor will I set in this room a minute longer with them.

Minister—Oh, do not feel that way about them, Mrs. Crabbe, they are perfectly harmless. (She goes out without saying good bye.)



Bride—Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do?

(Enters Mrs. Seegood; shakes hands and welcomes them both home.)

Mrs. Seegood—It is a great pleasure to meet you, Mrs. West. You will overlook my calling so soon after your arrival, but I felt I could not come too soon to welcome you.

(Both assure her she is welcome.)

Bride—Take this fan, Mrs. Seegood, you look warm. Do let me give you some tea.

Mrs. Seegood—Thank you, I would greatly appreciate a cup of tea, but I notice you have had a number of callers; we must not tire you out.

Minister—My wife is afraid she is not going to be a social success, Mrs. Seegood. Eh, Rosalind?

Mrs. Seegood—Oh, do not feel that way, Mrs. West, there are so many kindly people in the congregation, it takes a while to know us. Pardon me, but may I look at the Madonnas? (Goes over to them). What excellent copies they are. I have had the pleasure of seeing the originals with my husband.

The Minister—A great privilege, I am sure.

Bride—Oh, John, don't you think sometime we might go and see them?

Minister—Well, I am afraid by the time we have saved up enough to go, Rosalind, we will not care to stir far from our own fire side.

Bride—Oh, John, you are so depressing.

Mrs. Seegood—We will hope some way may be opened for the deserving. Now, I will not stay longer to-day, dear Mrs. West; I hope you will be happy with us, and not take us too seriously, we all mean well. Good bye for now.

Minister—Well, that will be the last, and I must off to the study. Why, what's the matter, child? (bride has sunk into chair exhausted, puts handkerchief to eyes), cheer up, and come along with me (takes her by arm.)

(Curtain falls as he leads her out.)

## SCENE III.

(Minister and wife sitting around reading lamp, she, very prettily dressed, working a motto on card-board with bright colored wool, or knitting. Minister reading aloud to her out of a large volume, she yawns several times, minister reads on.)

(Rap at door, minister goes, enter couple, not very young, who want to be married.)

Minister—Come in, come in, Sir; Miranda, this is my wife. My wife, Jim—be seated.

(Bride giggles and hides her face in her hands.)

Miranda—Oh, Mr. Minister, I feel—(giggles.)

Minister—Sit down, Miranda.

Miranda—Oh, I can't, really; I really can't (goes off into giggles), it really is too funny (laughs again.) Oh, Jim, I won't wait, I really won't, it is too absurd (giggles and starts to run off, Jim goes after her and brings her back.)

Jim—Come back, Miranda, don't be pretending you want to back out. You've been a long time coaxing me to bring you to the minister. You don't need to have no such carrying on as this (leads her to chair), set down now.

Miranda (laughing)—Oh, I really can't keep from laughing, it is all so ridiculous (bride offers her drink of water, she chokes laughing.)

Jim—You see, Minister, I want you to do a job for

me, leastways Miranda does, she has been talking me into it nigh on to ten years now; I tho't we was well enough as we was, but she was set on it.

Miranda (laughing)—Oh, Jim, you are too absurd; don't believe him, Mrs. West.

Jim—I'm a man of my word, Minister, and I gave her my word nine years ago come next twelfth of July, that I would marry her, settin' no date. Miranda keeps mindin' me of it most every week since, which seems to me to be unnatural like, being as she knows, and every one knows, I am a man of my word.

Miranda (giggling)—Oh, Jim, how could you ?

Minister—Your bride-to-be seems to have a keen sense of humor, which will oil the domestic wheels I doubt not. When would you like the ceremony performed ?

Jim—Well, tell the truth, I am not particular. Ask Miranda here, she's at the back of it, mayhap she will be willin' to wait a spell longer.

Miranda (sobers up) —Oh, yes; yes, Mr. Minister, to-night, do let it be to-night, I am quite ready, do get up, Jim.

Minister—Well, we will go to the study. Come, Rosalind, we will need you for witness, just come in when you are ready. (Minister and bride go out.)

Miranda—Come, Jim, it will soon be over, come away.

Jim (groans loudly as she tries to urge him out of chair)—It will be only begun you mean.

Miranda—I thought you were a man of your word, Jim.

Jim—And that I am, Miranda Meek, or I would'nt be a walkin' into this trap to-night, and that's the truth.

Miranda—Oh, come on Jim, the minister is waiting.

Jim—Let him wait, I wish he had to wait for ten years yet.

Miranda—Now, see here, Jim Curtis, I have had all I am going to stand. I brought you here to marry you. I am going to do it, do you understand, so you just walk in with me like a man. You've been ha. in' round me for ten years, keepin' your betters away. You'll keep your promise now or my name is not Miranda Meek, which it won't be many minutes longer. I've set my mind on that. Come away.

Jim—Won't you let me off, Miranda ? You are too fine a woman to be tied to the likes of me. You might find a likelier man any day. I am lazy at times.

Miranda—Come away, Jim, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. If it is lazy you are, I'll soon cure you of that.

Minister (comes in)—You might perhaps step into the study if you are ready.

Miranda—As ready as we will ever be, Mr. West. Jim here has been keepin' company with me these ten years, bein' regular Tuesday and Sunday evenings. Come away (takes his arm and leads him out.)

(Minister and wife soon come back, laughing.)

Minister—Poor old Jim, he has put his neck in the yoke alright. Miranda will do her duty by him, however, she perhaps showed her preference for him in too marked a degree.

Bride—Preference! Why, John, it is all a revelation to me. Why, I thought girls had to be coaxed and coaxed before they said Yes. Why, you remember I would'nt even pretend to like you, for fear you would think I was running after you.

John—Oh, I remember well who did all the running, and the prize was well worth the running after.

Bride—I only wish others thought the same.

Minister—What difference does that make, Rosalind as long as I am satisfied? (drops into a chair, tired.) Can't you play and sing for me to-night while I rest and listen?

Bride—Well, Molly was coming over and we were going to have a little music. I think I hear her now (goes to door—enter Molly.) Come in, Molly, you brought your music? How nice, Mr. West was just wanting some music.

Molly—Well, I will be pleased to sing, but do play for us first, Mrs. West.

Bride—Why, certainly (plays old-fashioned piece with variations, such as Old Hundred.) Now, Molly, you sing that lovely song, "Silver Threads among The Gold," for us; will you play or will I? (Either one can play or sing.)

Minister—The ministry of song! Music often appeals to one when reasoning fails.

(Knock at the door, enter Mr. Right.)

Mr. Right—I hope I see you well, most noble Sir, and your faithful consort. (Sees Molly.) Ah, I am having great honor thrust upon me to-night. I had not dared to hope that it would be my lot to listen to these strains of heavenly music, dropping from the lips of a seraph.

Molly—If you mean me, I am no seraph, and don't make me ridiculous before our minister and his wife, who know good singing when they hear it. I sing very indifferently, and don't insult the angels by comparing my music with theirs. Why can't you be practical?

Mr. Right—I will leave the practical side to you, Molly, and I will gladly supply the sentimental side.

Bride (laughing)—I think, John, it is about time for us to leave the room.

Minister—On the contrary, I feel it my duty to stay, as my services may be required at any time.

Mr. Right—If I had my way they would be demanded to-night.

Molly (blushes and laughs)—Do try and have some sense. I never will take you until you get some.

Mr. Right—Then shall I delve and search for it, as for hidden treasure, for without you, Molly, "Strong in will, and rich in wisdom," life would indeed be, "Stale, flat and unprofitable."

Molly (blushing and confused, puts on her bonnet, a

poke, with rose buds under brim, and pink ribbon ties)—I really must go, Mrs. West.

Mr. Right—I really must go, too, Mrs. West. (Both bid good night.)

Bride—Well, is not that funny, John, I never thought she really cared for him, did you?

Minister—Why, of course, Rosalind, why should'nt she? a fine clever young man like that.

Bride—How like a man that sounds, as if girls were just setting around, waiting to be asked by any man at all; I am surprised to hear you talk that way. (Goes out of room.)

Minister (laughing)—Never mind, Rosalind, I did not mean to ruffle your feathers. (Knock at door, enter young man, loudly dressed, with a cityfied air.)

Minister—Well, well, come in, Robert, I am glad to see you. When did you return from the city?

Robert—Well, I only dropped in last evening, but it seems to me that I have been here years already; of all the stupid, half asleep country holes, this village is the worst.

Minister—Well, tell us all about what you have been doing in the city, it must be a month or more since you left the village. Have you been able to get a job that suits you? I hope for your mother's sake you are doing well. How is your mother?

Robert—Oh, she is well, thanks; that is, she has been in bed for a few days, but complains of nothing in particular, so I guess she's alright.



Minister—Your mother is not one to give in easily, Robert; she just lives for you, try and not disappoint her.

Robert—Well, that is just it. Mother has never been out of the village, and knows nothing of the world, or what it costs a fellow to live like other fellows. She expects me to spend all my evenings at prayer meetings and love feasts. She can't see that while these are all right in a village, a fellow would be laughed at as an old woman in the city, unless he did as other fellows did.

Minister—I don't just understand what kind of things you have to do, Robert, to be like other fellows.

Robert—(rather hesitates)—Well, for one thing, you can't go around showing your blue ribbon and pledge card all the time. If a fellow asks you to take a drink, you've got to be man enough to stand up and take it, and not slink out of it as if he had no back bone.

Minister—Now, Robert, you are on the wrong track, that is just where you require your back bone. It is in refusing that you show your strength of character, for when you know the right and do not do it, you show yourself a weak man in every way.

Robert—Oh, it is alright for ministers to talk, but they are never tempted; who would have the nerve to ask a minister to step in and have a drink ?

Minister—Your argument is weak, Robert, and not worthy of a man of thought. When I was your age, I lived in a city, and was subject to temptations the same as you are. I was not

always a minister; remember, a man is not born a minister. He struggles along through temptations the same as other young men. I do not mean to preach to you though, Robert, is there anything I can do for you?

Robert—Well, I do not like to ask under the circumstances, but I would be glad if you could recommend me to a firm where I could get a job; the paper says, however, they want a sober, industrious man. (Hands paper.)

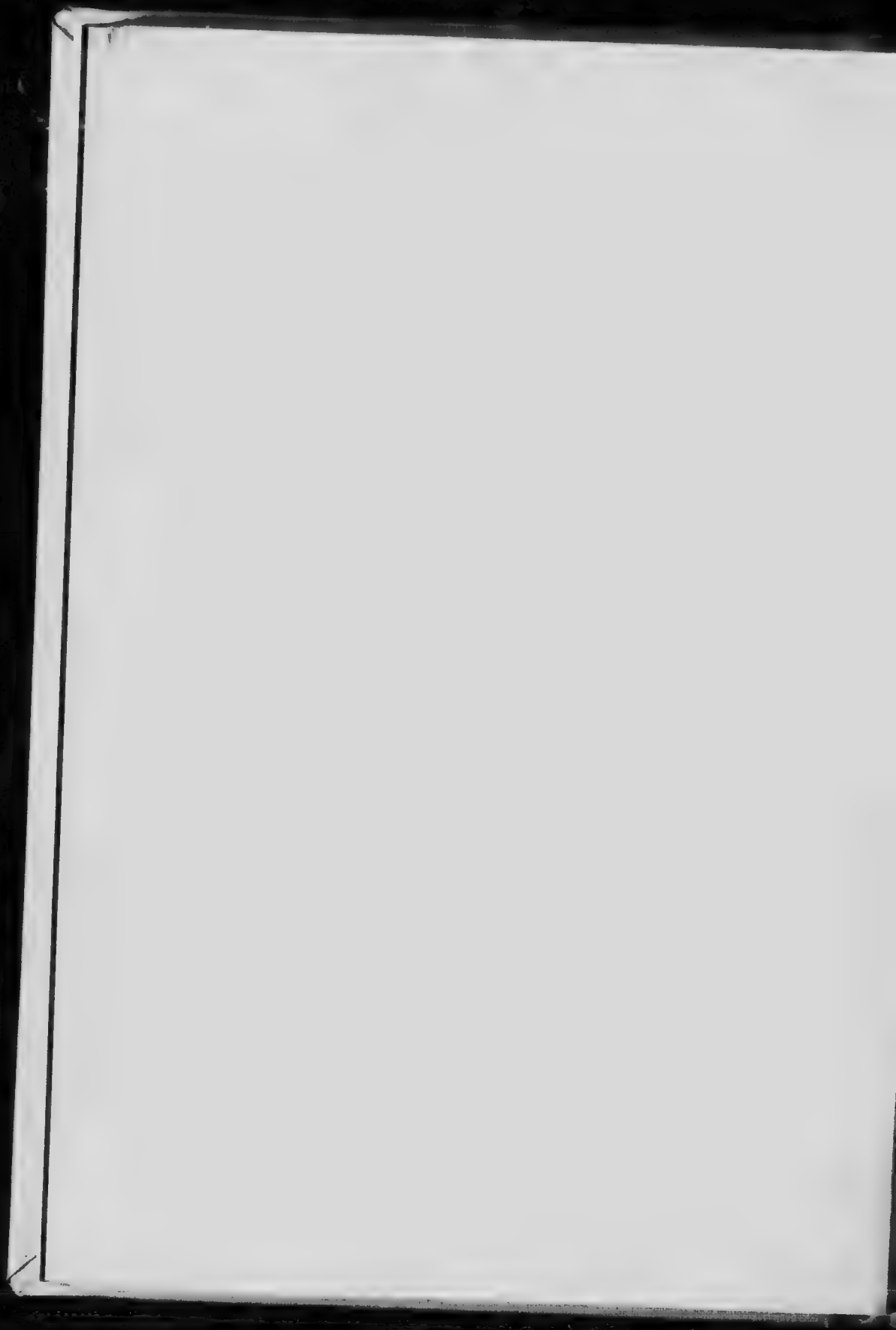
Minister—Sober and industrious. I would be glad to do so if I could conscientiously, Robert, for your own and your mother's sake. Play the man and do what you know to be right, letting others think you weak or strong as they please; do not forget your mother's teaching; remember "A boy's best friend is his mother." Let me call my wife. I would like her to sing that piece for you. (Enter bride, is introduced and consents to sing two verses. Robert seems to be impressed.)

Robert (at close of song, stands up and gives minister his hand)—I will, Mr. West, and when Robert Spence makes a promise he keeps it.

Minister—I believe in you, and will do all I can to help you. You must go? Well, come in on Friday evening, the young folks are coming in for a sing.

Robert—Thank you. You can count on me being present.

Minister (sinks down in chair and leans back, his wife puts pillow behind his head)—How they come and go, on such different errands, mostly for “the loaves and fishes,” but *while appearing to grant their requests alone*, you can also feed them with the Bread of Heaven. A grand calling, the ministry; so many opportunities to extend a helping hand. I would that more young men would enter its ranks. (Sits with eyes closed a minute then rises up, taking book, and blow out lamp.) Curtain falls.



## SCENE IV.

Scene opens with a number of young people at a party in minister's house. As many as wish can attend the party. It is necessary to have those who sing, play and recite among the number. All must adopt the old time dress.

Some are sitting around tables at games. Mr. Right and Molly in a corner (where seen) in deep conversation. One giggling girl sits near the front, talking to a young man. Goes off into spasms of laughter over everything he says.

One bashful young man, with a red confused face, his hands hanging heavily at sides, sits on edge of chair, near front of platform. The minister and wife try to make him feel at home. They bring a young lady and introduce her.

Bride—I hope you are enjoying yourself, Ephraim. Have you met any of the young ladies? Let me bring Miss Jones over to you, I am sure you will be agreeable company.

(Brings her and introduces her.)

Ephraim—(Rises, bows low, partly loses his balance, sits down on edge of chair nearly tipping it over; steps on Miss Jones' skirt, and becomes more confused; apologizes awkwardly.)

Miss Jones—Don't mention it, Mr. Snelgrove; the skirt is in the way, it is quite my fault. Do sit down now and let us have a comfortable chat.

Ephraim—You will find me poor company, Miss Jones. I am alright out in the open, but there is too much of me when I get into a parlor where ladies are present. I should have known enough to have stayed away. I only came because the minister was kind enough to invite me.

Miss Jones—Well, I am real glad you came. I don't like parlor men if that is what you mean, so don't make any extra effort to entertain me. Let us just be comfortable and friendly.

Ephraim—You are very kind. I feel more at home already. Would you mind staying with me? that is, unless—unless—that is, unless (mops his brow in confusion.)

Miss Jones—Why, certainly I will stay, but the minister is going to speak I think. (Quietness.)

Minister—I propose we have an impromptu concert. I have made out a programme and appointed myself chairman. (They all clap. Hear! hear!) The first item is a chorus by all.

(All stand up and sing it well. Minister announces each selection. As many numbers can be given as desirable, but all old pieces. The giggling girl goes off into spasms while beginning to sing, but puts handkerchief in mouth, and makes no noise.)

Chorus—"Darling Nellie Gray"; or, "Wait for the Waggon."

Solo—Miss Janet Heather (Old Scotch song.)

Recitation—Mr. Right—"Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night."

Piano or Organ Solo (Old piece with variations.

Solo—"Gathering Up the shells from the Shore." (All sing chorus.)

Duet—"Hunting Tower."

Quartette—"The Old Oaken Bucket."

Presentation of pickle cruets to minister's bride.

Mr. Right—It affords me profound satisfaction to be present on this most auspicious occasion, and I realize that I am indeed "bearing my blushing honors thick upon me" in being allowed to read this address to our minister's wife. We wish to place ourselves on record as being well satisfied and delighted with our minister's choice; in fact, had we been consulted, we realize that we would have chosen the same lady fair, and we believe that to use a quotation, "Time cannot wither her or custom stale her infinite variety." On behalf of those gathered here this evening, I have great pleasure in asking our minister's bride to accept this pickle dish, not for its intrinsic value, but as a slight—very slight—token of appreciation.

(Miss Heather presents it.)

Mr. Right—I would ask Mr. Ephraim Snelgrove to make a few remarks, to substantiate what I have already affirmed. Mr. Snelgrove. (Others nudge him and urge him to rise. He blushes, wipes his face and after two unsuccessful efforts to rise, finally rises.)

Mr. Snelgrove—Mr. and Mrs. West--and--and--and friends--and friends, it is indeed a great—a great—a great—

Robert—A great effort, eh, Thomas ?

(Much laughter, but silence when any one speaks)

Ephraim—It is a great pleasure—a great pleasure to me—(Stops again, looks dazed, wipes brow.)

Robert—You look like it, Ephraim; don't take it so hard, bear up, old fellow. (All laugh.)

Ephraim—I feel—I feel—I feel badly indeed. (All laugh again.)

Robert—What is your trouble, old man? Not catching I hope. Let me feel your pulse.

(Ephraim, much confused, sits down.)

Minister—Like Ephraim, I feel too deeply to express myself, so I can readily understand his position, but on behalf of my wife you will allow me to express my deep appreciation of your thoughtfulness for her. Remember, the minister and the minister's bride are always the friends of the young people.

(Young people clap. Hear! hear!)

All form circle around the minister and his wife and sing closing chorus, "Auld Lang Syne," followed by "God Save the King."

Curtain falls.



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